

**A Proposal Analyzing the Effects of Honors Residence Hall Life
Upon Non-Honors Students**

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Abstract

Honors Housing at Ball State University is meant for Honors students to be able to live together to increase their ability to form study groups and succeed academically during their freshman year. However, there are a number of non-Honors students that reside in these buildings. My Honors Thesis is a qualitative study of the effects that an Honors residence hall has on non-Honors students. I provide quotations from non-Honors students in the Honors hall and non-Honors hall as evidence for the success rate of these students.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of dormitories in the United States, people have been researching the impacts that living together can have on college students. Over the course of time, researchers in the area of Student Affairs have found that dormitories are not what they used to be. In the past, dormitories were simply a place to sleep while attending school. However, now they are places for students to learn alongside fellow students. The effects that these living quarters have on students are innumerable. So innumerable, in fact, that they are not even referred to as “dorms,” and have not been for many years. “Residence Halls” are such a hot topic of discussion in the area of student learning because of the effects that they have on the overall student. Frederiksen (1979) stated that the purpose for residence halls extended far beyond giving students a place to sleep. Residence halls should provide educational support to the students by ensuring an opportunity for the personal, scholastic, and social improvement of the residents.

At Ball State University, the Housing and Residence Life (HRL) Department strives to create unique living environments for all of its residents. Freshmen are required to reside on-campus for the first year unless they are living with their parents or spouse. This enables HRL to have an impact on a majority of the students at Ball State. One of the unique living communities that is offered to students is the Honors Housing. If accepted into the Honors College at Ball State University as a freshman, a student must reside in the Honors Housing. However, people outside of the Honors College may also reside in this community. Some of these students are people that wanted to room with Honors students and some are students that simply wanted to reside in that type of community.

Having been a Resident Assistant in an Honors Housing environment for two years, I am very interested in how students are positively affected by this community. There are many studies that have been done concerning the effects of Honors Housing on Honors students; however, very little has been researched about the non-honors students that reside in those communities, as well. Therefore, three main questions emerged for this study:

1. How are non-honors freshman students' studying habits affected by living in a community that is academically focused?
2. Do these students get involved with more extra-curricular activities than non-honors freshman students residing in non-honors housing? Why?
3. How are the non-honors freshman students' grades affected by whether or not they reside in honors environments?

Furthermore, if these answers sway towards non-honors freshman students achieving more within an honors environment, should non-honors students be more integrated in the honors community to increase performance levels or would this lower the number of honors students to a level that would negate the positives?

The hypothesis that I derived for this study was that non-honors freshman students residing in honors environments at Ball State University achieve higher grades and are more actively involved in extra curricular activities than non-honors freshman students residing in non-honors environments.

METHOD

A qualitative research study was conducted in order to get an overall sense (academic, emotional, and social support) of the communities from the students residing within them first hand. Advertisements for volunteers to participate in this study were hung in each of two living environments - Woody/Shales Hall (a non-honors, predominantly freshman residence hall of about 400 residents) and Schmidt/Wilson Hall (an honors, predominantly freshman residence hall of about 420 residents) – until three volunteers emerged from each hall. Participants had to be non-honors freshman students. It had not been planned this way, but all of the participants that volunteered were female, which proved to be an advantage due to the fact that it ruled out gender as an influence on answers.

Hour long interviews were conducted with each of the six participants individually. A series of questions were asked pertaining to the students' involvement in campus life, study habits, grades, and how the students are affected by the living environment they are in. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for comparison. Major points of interest and main themes emerged from these interviews. Those main themes are focused on below.

When the interviewees are quoted within the study they are listed as Students A, B, C, D, E, and F. Students A, B, and C are non-honors freshmen residing in an honors environment; students D, E, and F are non-honors freshmen residing in a non-honors environment.

RESULTS

The focus on academics is very noticeable in the honors living environment.

When asked how the students feel their grades are affected by their floor mates, Student C responded, "...People in the building, in Schmidt/Wilson as a whole, even if they aren't honors students, they seem to care about their grades. So, nobody is pressuring anyone to go out if they have stuff they need to get done, because everyone pretty much here cares about their grades to a certain extent."

All three students in the honors environment mentioned at some point during the interview how important academics were to the staff and students residing within Schmidt/Wilson. Whether they showed this through studying themselves or by having conversations with each other about classes, they all took a special interest in academics. Student C said that students within her hall promote studying by studying themselves. She said that she even sees that non-honors students study more. That makes her feel that she should be studying as well. Student A said that she believes Schmidt/Wilson has had a huge impact on her success at college. "I think from the dorms I have been in and experienced on campus, this is definitely the one I would want to be in as far as motivating my study skills."

All three of these women had set high goals for their grades from the beginning, whereas only one of the women from the non-honors hall had set specific goals, and her reasoning for doing so was because of her sorority. The living environment may not be a cause for the goal setting, but there is a definite relationship between the two.

Along with setting goals, these three women all had specific stories as to how students converse about the topic of classes within their residence hall. Student A said, “First semester, through Freshmen Connections, I had one class with people from my hall. We all had philosophy and we frequently met and had little study sessions...and that was great, because you had the support of people that live right by you, and I have other people around the hall that have nursing classes with me and that is really great.” Student B said that people in the hall talk about classes all the time. They discuss which professors they like personally and academically and what projects are coming up soon. Student C also said that she speaks with other residents on a regular basis. “It’s really helpful that I have a lot of girls that are in my classes, even if it is just one or two on the floor, because we keep each other accountable for classes.” The three women from the non-honors hall did not have specific stories about discussions they shared concerning classes. They did mention that they had classes once in a while together. One of them even said that she studies with someone from her hall. However, this was not seen as an important part of her studying habits. Overall, students in the honors hall discussed classes and professors more than students from the non-honors hall.

The students residing within the honors environment seem to feel more academically supported by the staff than their counterparts in the non-honors environment. When asked the same question of how they feel supported by their Resident Assistant, Assistant and Resident Hall Directors, and Housing, all three women within the honors environment had positive comments to say. Student A said that these people were great role models that she strives to be more like and Student C said that the support from them is obviously an important thing. Student B said, “My RA will ask

how classes are going and we will talk about it. And just the girls and people in the dorm...it is a very supportive environment.” The students in the non-honors environment had less to say about the support they feel. Student D did say that her second RA was supportive, but she provided no specific details or examples, while Student E simply said, “Not particularly.” Student F, however, had very positive words to say about her connection with her Resident Assistant. “Yeah, my RA is actually the one who told me to go get a tutor and talk to my professor when I was having trouble. She is always offering to read my papers for me and proofread things for me...” Obviously, the actual abilities of the staff within these halls cannot be judged on the statements of six students; however, these statements support the assumption that there does seem to be a larger sense of support among the students residing in the honors environment.

Fellow students from the honors hall challenge the non-honors students academically more often than in the non-honors hall. “My friend who lives a few doors down, who is also a nursing major, she’s a genius pretty much. She’s one that probably studies more than she socializes, which is really rare. She’s always the one that does the best in the class on the tests. So, she has definitely inspired me just by being who she is,” said Student A. Along with just seeing others and being inspired by them, Student B said that knowing that the people around her are doing so well makes her want to achieve more. “Usually when I have classes with other girls on the floor, they will get higher grades than me on tests. That challenges me, because I want to do as well as them.” Student A said that her roommate challenges her because of their friendship. If Student A failed a class, she said she would not only have failed to herself, but she would feel that she failed to her roommate. They have high expectations for each other.

When speaking about being distracted by her floor mates, Student B said, “When I know that I have a test or something in crunch time, I will go in my room and study or go in the study lounge to get away from them. When they know I have stuff to do, they are like, “Get out. Go! Get your stuff done!” Student C said, “There have been a lot of people that have offered to study with me, and there’s been quite a few guys on the 3rd floor that I have had classes with that are super smart. And they have really helped me out, especially during test times.” In the honors hall, these three women feel like they are challenged academically on a regular basis by their fellow residents.

The three women from the non-honors living environment did give some examples of other residents supporting their academic endeavors. They made statements about others understanding the need for studying and students asking how their classes were going. However, there were very few examples given of being challenged. One of the examples was when Student E said, “My best friend lived on my floor and we were both like-minded hard workers. We motivated each other to study and would often study in the lounge at the same times and take breaks together.” Students D and E both said that they were not challenged by their roommates at all, and Student F said she did not know whether she was challenged at all by her roommate.

Whereas the students within the honors hall focused their responses on being challenged by the surroundings, the students within the non-honors hall focused their answers around building friendships. Neither way is better, they are just two completely different views. Student F said, “I don’t know what it’s like in other dorms, but people here seem to be really friendly and have their doors open all the time. You can talk to people and there are a lot of girls on my floor that I’ve made friends with just because

they are easy to talk to. I really feel like if I hadn't had that many friends and I hadn't have felt like I was wanted, then I wouldn't have enjoyed college so much." Student D said, "I am a person who needs to establish a friendship of some sort, because it makes it easier to study with them. Many people in my environment were perfect for that." The students within the honors environment also mentioned friendships a couple times, but that was not the focus of their responses like it was for the others. They mentioned that they had made great friends in the hall and that was a benefit to them. However, they did not say that was a requirement for their success.

On average, the students within the honors hall achieved higher grades even though they professed to spend less time on academics each week than the students within the non-honors hall. When asked how many hours per week they spent studying, the largest number said by a student within the honors hall was 10 to 15, while that was the smallest number said by any of the three students from the non-honors hall. The times spent socializing were relatively equal among all of them, mostly averaging above 30 hours per week.

However, when comparing their grade point averages, it is clear that as an average the students within the honors hall did better. Students A, B, and C received a 3.5, 3.7, and 3.59 (which placed them all on the Dean's List), while Students D, E, and F received a 2.8, 3.8, and 3.3. Obviously, Student E achieved a higher G.P.A than any of the three students within the honors hall. However, Student E is also the student that consistently had negative remarks to say about her living environment. She said that she felt that her environment had no effect on her success, because she took it upon herself to find other places to study when she could not within her hall. She also said, "The only

place I feel that I can study is in the study lounge and sometimes not even there because people are always socializing.” The overall feeling received from this student was that she was unhappy with the academic environment of her surroundings. She seemed to feel that her success rested solely on her shoulders and was more in spite of living in that environment as compared to motivated by that living environment.

Students’ perceptions of how many times the residents around them miss class are relatively the same; however, the women from the non-honors residence hall again focused on their friends and not necessarily the community as a whole.

“There are people that I know that don’t go to class, but most of the people that I am close to do go,” said Student F. Student E also said, “There are girls in my hall that do not attend class, but almost all of my friends regularly attend class.” These statements show that these students are used to seeing people miss class on a regular basis, but that the people they choose to associate with within their community normally do attend class. Student A mimicked the idea of centering her answer on her friends. She said, “Yes! Yes, my friends are really good about going to class. And when they do miss, they feel guilty about it.” However, the other two students from the honors hall emphatically answered that the students from their hall do regularly attend class (not just their friends). Whether or not people outside of the students’ friend base affect their motivation to attend class is really not discernable. All of the students gave comparable answers as to how many times they miss class themselves, so it could be possible that the other students in the building have no effect on this area of motivation.

The three women from the honors hall are more actively involved in organizations within and from outside their living environment than the three

women from the non-honors hall. The list of organizations that the students from the honors hall are involved in include the following activities: Hall Council, Special Events and Programming Committee, a service sorority, three religious organizations, the floor Bathroom Committee, Habitat for Humanity, and a national honor society. This list is very long for only three women. Each of these women said that someone (or many people) from their hall had encouraged them or motivated them to join these activities. Student C said, "...a lot of people in this building are really involved in tons of things. I have friends on the 8th floor and a lot of people who are pretty much involved in tons of things. My roommate is involved in a lot too." Student B said, "The girls I met when I first got [to this hall encouraged me to join]. I did a lot of volunteer work back home. And the ministry, there was a girl on my floor who went to it, so I started going with her." She went on to state that her resident assistant and other girls on her floor got her involved in hall activities.

The three women from the non-honors hall are involved in two social sororities, an academic fraternity, and a traveling fan group for the men's volleyball team. None of these women mentioned anyone from their hall as an influence for joining these organizations, and they also did not mention any involvement within their residence hall. There is a very noticeable difference between the involvements of these students.

Some people may question how the time commitments affect academics. The students within the honors hall are more active and therefore probably have less free time. However, they actually are excelling academically. It may be possible that the more time commitments a student has, the more likely they are to stay on task. This may be an explanation for the difference in grades.

The perceptions of an honors residence hall are very different from the reality of the environment. “When I found out I was in the honors building, I was kind of like, ‘Oh, Man!’ I was disappointed, because I just wanted to be a regular college student, and I thought, ‘These kids will just be studying and it won’t be any fun’,” said Student B. She viewed living in an honors environment as a negative because she would not feel like a normal college student. The overall feeling from the three students within the honors living environment was that they were not completely thrilled with their placement within that hall. They were scared that no one would want to have any fun or be social. Student B went on to say, “And I actually had the wrong perception. After talking to people that live in other dorms, I like it so much better...It is a very social environment, people know when to study and they know when to have fun.” Student C said, “...academically you can get good grades, at the same time they are doing a lot of fun things. There are a lot of fun people. The doors aren’t always closed; the people aren’t trapped in there studying. People can really balance it out and it’s a good time. So, I am living here next year. I think it is different from other dorms, that’s why I am coming back. My roommate next year has even said she is coming back here because if she is tempted to go out and party or whatever, she’s not as much here as she would be in the other dorms.”

CONCLUSION

Due to the small sample population interviewed for this research study, these conclusions cannot be completely generalized to a larger and different population. However, this study will definitely prove helpful to future studies and theories.

With regards to these six women at Ball State University, my hypothesis was correct. The non-honors freshman students residing within an honors living environment on average did indeed achieve higher grades and were more actively involved in extra-curricular activities than the non-honors freshman students residing within a non-honors living environment. As a whole, the three students within the honors environment also seem more adjusted within their halls.

It is hard to say whether or not it would be a positive experience to integrate more non-honors students into the honors environment. There is always the possibility that there will be a loss of that honors feeling that seems to be so strong within the three women from that environment. However, it seems that these students are achieving so much more than their counterparts in another hall. Therefore, should all of the students be given the opportunity to excel in this way?

It is my belief that by simply telling these students that they are residing within an honors environment, they are intrinsically more motivated to achieve and compete with those students around them. So, I have yet to discover if they are excelling due to competition within themselves or from motivation of others.

FUTURE STUDIES

So many follow-up studies could and should be done from this initial study. For example, are students within non-honors living environments receiving enough educational support from faculty and staff? If they are the students achieving lower grades to begin with, should the staff be more focused on them academically than they are the students within the honors halls? Another follow-up study could be done on whether or not more inclusive living environments could play an important role in student success. Instead of creating whole buildings full of honors students (with a few interspersed non-honors students), should halls be more balanced? Could this help non-honors students to succeed better? In turn, would this be positive or negative for the honors students that it would affect? Yet another very pertinent follow-up would be to study the effects of non-honors students within an honors environment on the honors student. Does this help those students with more social skills, hurt their academics, or basically have no effect on them?

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Non-Honors Freshman Students Residing in Honors Environments

Interview Answers

Transcribed from audio recording

Listed as Interviewees A, B, and C

Is your roommate an Honors student?

A – No, she's not.

B – No, she is not.

C – No

Where do you feel that you have a quiet place to study within the hall?

A - Uh, in my study lounge on my floor and also in my room when my roommate isn't there.

B - The study lounge...my floor study lounge, not the big one.

C - My room, I can just shut the door and be in my room and that is quiet enough for me because my neighbors are not loud.

What was your G.P.A. last semester?

A – 3.5

B – 3.7

C – 3.59

How do fellow students in your hall promote studying?

A - Um, they are generally supportive. Most of the students seem focused on, um, schoolwork. It's usually, usually pretty calm.

B - They basically go to the study lounge...well, like, when people know that they need to study in the study lounge, other activities like if we play games, people will get out or they will shut their doors.

C - The students in my hall promote studying by studying themselves. You don't go by rooms without seeing people studying, even though they are not all in honors. You just see a lot of studying going on. And, they are studying in the study lounge.

How do you feel that your grades are affected by your roommate/floormates?

A - Well, obviously the, um, the desire to be social is pretty big and affects my study skills, but usually people are pretty supportive, uh, my roommate especially...she knows when I need quiet and when to stay away.

B - I think I get distracted a lot by my floormates because I go and talk to them and hang out. My roommate and I don't really talk, so she doesn't really affect me that much. When I know that I have a test or something, in crunch time, I will go in my room and study or go in the study lounge to get away from them. When they know I stuff to do, they are like, "Get out. Go! Get your stuff done!"

C - I have an awesome roommate, and there is pretty much no possible way to make her mad. I have yet to make her mad still. She is really laid back. Um, but, I mean, people in the building, in Schmidt/Wilson as a whole, even if they aren't honors students, they seem to care about their grades. So, nobody is like pressuring anyone to go out if they have stuff they need to get done and stuff, because everyone pretty much here cares about their grades to a certain extent.

Is it quiet in your hall at a reasonable time for you to sleep before classes?

A - Yes, um, when is it quiet? It usually quiets down by midnight and then, um, people generally down get up until around 9 or 10, so it is pretty good.

B - Yes, usually by one o'clock

C - I think the floor is quiet anytime after dinner around 5 or 6, and even when I take naps during the day, I have no problem napping at any time. My floor isn't loud at all.

Do your friends within your hall regularly attend class?

A - Yes! Yes, my friends are really good about going to class. And when they do miss, they feel guilty about it.

B - Yes, yeah, they do.

C - Yeah, they do.

How often do you miss class?

A - I only miss class if I have a good reason, um, such as if I need to study for a test coming up, but, uh, I probably miss one or two every two weeks.

B - (*Laughs*) Um, well, I have gotten really bad about that. Uh, I miss one class about once a week, and now that summer has come I have been missing a lot of them. Last week was so nice I missed 3 or 4 classes on Thursday and Friday. It doesn't affect my grades, because I know when it is important. I share notes with people, so I don't miss stuff.

C - I have missed one class this semester, I missed math one time because I was tired. That is it, just once. People are more amazed that I haven't missed class, but no one really encourages me or discourages me to attend class.

Are you involved in any on-campus organizations?

A - Yes, um hall council in my dorm, SE&P in my dorms - Student Events and Programming, I'm in a service sorority, ESA, uh, involved in my church on campus.

B - Habitat For Humanity, and, uh, Baptist Collegiate Ministries, and I just got involved on the floor, Bathroom Committee.

C - I attend the Revolution on Sunday, it's a church. Abundant Life Ministries, I guess is the name, but it is called the Revolution. We meet in the Student Center every Sunday at 11 and I go to fellowship team every Thursday that goes along with that church. I have gone to Hall Council a few times. I think there is this other thing I just paid my dues for, it's like this National Honor Society, I can't remember what it's called.

Who encouraged you to join these?

- A - Um, a little bit of everybody...my RA probably had a big effect on me joining um stuff in the hall, and I met a few people who were interested in doing service work and we found out about the service sorority, so friends in that aspect and I met the pastor of my church before I started going to church there.
- B - The girls I met when I first got here. I did a lot of volunteer work back home. And the ministry, there was a girl on my floor who went to it, so I started going with her. And the floor activities, well, my RA and the girls on the floor that are part of RHA or SE&P.
- C - My sister and her husband started me going to that church. Anything else, like a lot of people in this building are really involved in tons of things. I have friends on the 8th floor and a lot of people who are pretty much involved in tons of things. My roommate is involved in a lot too.

Are you in any leadership roles on-campus?

- A - Missions leader at my church and I hold a chair in my sorority. I am the rush chair. I am in charge of rush week...one week in the Fall semester and in the Spring semester, it is just kind of recruiting.
- B - Well, I just try to take leadership on my floor, like if there is an activity, I try to get all the girls to do it. Or, like, all the Intramural leagues I usually get together.
- C - Um, not really. I have helped lead worship. I am not sure that counts.

How have your study habits changed since high school?

- A - I studied definitely a lot more than I did in high school, it's kind of a requirement just to get by, but um, you have to. I read a lot more, I read the book a lot more. Yeah, just overall.
- B - I think they have changed a lot. I guess you could say for the worst, because in high school I used to...I made up a schedule...after practice, I would just study and study and study. And here, I kind of put it off...I stay up later. I am not on a routine. I am more carefree here, but it really hasn't affected my GPA at all. I know when to get it done.
- C - My study habits haven't changed since high school. I studied in high school. I am not one of those people who can just take tests without studying, so I have always been a studier. I am not too good at taking tests, so I have to.

Do you feel like this environment has played a significant role in your success?

- A - Yes, yeah, I think from the dorms I have been in and experienced on campus, this is definitely the one I would want to be in as far as um motivating my study skills.
- B - Yes, I do. I hear rumors about other dorms. How it is like loud and crazy. I feel like this dorm is more, um they like to have fun, but there is also a serious side. Like people know when to get quiet and study and stuff like that. A with a lot of the Honors kids, they have to study and that makes me have to study too.

C - Yes, I do. In fact, I am living here next year, because I have noticed that, like I said, as a whole this building I think, even though they are not all honors, it's not like...well, I don't know what the percentage is, but it's academically you can get good grades, at the same time they are doing a lot of fun things, there's a lot of fun people. The doors aren't always closed, the people aren't trapped in there studying. People can really balance it out and it's a good time. So, I am living here next year. I think it is different from other dorms, that's why I am coming back.

Why did you come to college?

A - Um, to get an education. To get myself on the right path. To get a degree. I knew that what I wanted to be required that.

B - To get an education degree, so I can get a good job.

C - I came to college to further my education, because I think there is more and more demand of that nowadays. Especially, even though I am not positive what I am doing, might possibly Public Relations. But also, I don't know. It is kind of the ideal environment for kids my age. Just a bunch of us in the same age group, living together. So, it is a fun time, but also to further my education. I am paying for it, it's not like my parents are paying for it.

Is Ball State meeting your expectations of college life? Why or why not?

A - Yes, it is...I like the campus in general, I like the size of the campus, um I feel like there are a lot of opportunities to get involved with other things outside of school. The program itself that I am in, the nursing program, I have really been impressed with and also the fine arts department, I am getting a minor. That's been really great. The only thing I have not been impressed with is the parking service.

B - Yes, because there was actually between two colleges that I was going to choose and the other one was in the middle of a cornfield, not that much to do and this is just more like where I am from, something like a bigger city. I think it is perfect for me...not too big, not too small. They always have activities going on on the weekends. Smaller classes, which I like a lot. It's good.

C - Of course it is. I mean, I lived in a small town and I went to a small school and I had a big family and small church. So, this is widening my horizons and there are a lot of neat, cool people that I have met. So, yes, this has met my expectations in a lot of ways, good and bad.

How were you hoping to do academically?

A - Um, maintain a 3.5, maybe even a little better. I would like to improve my GPA even some more now that I am adjusted.

- B - I guess I came into college thinking, like, I graduated top 10, so, I knew...I thought it would be easier, I thought I would come to this point when it would be easy for me like in high school. But it actually got harder, and I just kind of realized that it is not same. It is a lot different. You just have to...one of my classes I was failing and that is not something I wasn't used to...I had to drop it. I talked to my parents and they said, "It's college, just get your degree...it's not like high school. You just have to pass, don't worry about that." It's not the same thing.
- C - Um, I didn't really know what percentage dean's list was. 3.5, I guess. I wanted to do that, hopefully I can keep that. I made it first semester, but I'm not sure about this next semester, we'll see. So, I had high goals for how I wanted to do grade wise, especially if it was just core class.

Did you set goals for your grades?

- A - Yeah, 3.5.
- B - Yes I did. I think I set like a 3.8, but I wasn't realizing like how it would be. I expected it to be like high school...busy work and extra credit and stuff, but it's not like that, you just tests and quizzes and stuff. I set a higher goal than I probably should have.
- C - (*Question Discarded, already answered.*)

How did you strive to meet those goals?

- A - Um, I think I made myself study when I knew it was necessary. Striving to keep myself from getting negative.
- B - I used to go to my classes a lot...I never would have missed or stuff like that. At the beginning of the year, I studied like I did in high school and just kept studying, but I got to this point that I realized I could do other things besides just studying and keep my grades up.
- C - By not missing class and, um, I think by having a roommate that I really get along with that just checks off a lot of things. I don't have to stress out about that, that has been nothing but awesome. And so, not having to worry about little things has helped me focus on that, especially since I know that I am paying for, so I am not just going to mess around and not focus.

What do people on your floor discuss about classes?

- A - Um, Well first semester, through Freshmen Connections, I had one class with people from my hall...we all had philosophy and we frequently met and had little study sessions. That is my one example of talking about classes within the hall, and that was great, because you had the support of people that live right by you, and I have other people around the hall that have nursing classes with me and that is really great.
- B - Um, we discuss about it all the time...I always tell stories about the kids in my class and my professors and what is going on. They usually talk about professors- who they like and who they don't like, different assignments and projects that are going on. There are a lot of discussions about class.

C - They discuss the hard ones together. Because of Freshman Connections, there have been a lot of girls on my floor that have had similar classes and that's when they meet and get together for study groups. It's really helpful that I have a lot of girls that are in my classes, even if it is just one or two on the floor, because we keep each other accountable for classes. I don't know, for study partners also.

Do you have meetings with your professors?

A - Um, the only consistent meetings I had was with my philosophy professor. He really reached out to help us. He kind of initiated them with the whole class by presenting the opportunity to meet with him whenever and then it was up to us.

B - Once in a while...in one of my classes, I have to do webpages, so I meet with him a lot, because he is very open and will give lots of critiques and stuff and help me. Most of my professors, if you ever need them...they have their office hours for help.

C - Yes, I have. Just one in particular, my philosophy professor, meets with us about our papers. He'll go over them and keep us on the straight and narrow, makes sure we're not really far off. He does that for all students, so I don't really know how he makes time for it, but he does.

How are you challenged academically by your roommate?

A - Um, well, my roommate and I are not only roommates, but also great friends, so we hold high expectations for each other. I know that as a friend, if I were to fail in any way, I would not only feel like I failed myself, but also for the people around me in my life, and she would be one of those. So, she kind of, I guess, gives me the drive to excel, not necessarily vocally, but as a friend.

B - Um, I don't know, I don't think she academically challenges me. We have two different majors. We don't talk that much. Usually when I have classes with other girls on the floor, they will get higher grades than me on tests. That challenges me, because I want to do as well as them.

C - Um, well, I am kind of a competitive person by nature, even if it is something like our grades. I got like two-tenths of a hundred better than her and I was like HA HA! (*Laughs*) I don't know, I think she is taking harder classes. I really have no clue; she is a nursing major. Just, she challenges me because she is up studying a lot, so that makes me feel bad if I'm not, and maybe vice versa for her. So, just keep each other on check.

Are you involved in hall council?

A - (No answer)

B - no

C - Not really. I have gone 2 or 3 times. Enjoyed the food. Not very deeply involved. I was involved a lot in high school and I just kind of want to take a breather this year, because I did so much. I plan on it, I think more next year. But this year, I was just laying back and soaking it in.

How many hours/ week do you spend on academics?

- A - 10 or 12...10 to 15. That is probably about average for people around here.
- B - Um, probably, it varies. I have all my tests in one week and then I have a break. Probably about one hour/night at least on the weeknights, not weekends. Then on the weekends, I study a bunch...maybe 3 or 4 hours. But that all varies.
- C - Uh, maybe a maximum of 5...depending on when I have tests. If there is tests, I could easily spend, you know, like, a few more than that...like 8 or 9, if there's tests. At most, probably 5.

How many hours/week do you spend socializing?

- A - (*Laughs*) More than 10 or 15...Maybe 25? That is probably about average.
- B - (*Laughs*) Majority of the week, I would say. I would say about 4 to 5 hours/day. There is a lot of socializing going on.
- C - All the rest of that time that I didn't name, I would say. I am a very social person.

Do you feel supported academically by your RA, RHD/ARHD?

- A - Well, they are awesome role models that I look up to and strive to be more like, my RA especially.
- B - My RA will ask how classes are going and we will talk about it. And just the girls and people in the dorm...it is a very supportive environment.
- C - Yeah, of course. I mean, that's obviously an important thing. They like to keep the rules in line, and they have night staff and people on rounds and stuff like that. So, I definitely feel like they are pressing for that...making sure that we are behaving, getting good grades, but still having a good time.

Have you declared a major?

- A - Yes, nursing.
- B - Yes, I have...accounting
- C - No, not so much. I am leaning towards public relations next semester, because, you know, I took core classes all this first year and so, I need to take some classes in a certain major, maybe business.

Can you describe a time to me that you felt supported academically by a person living in your building?

- A - My friend who lives a few doors down, who is also a nursing major, she's uh, she's a genius pretty much. She's one that probably studies more than she socializes, which is really rare. She's always the one that does the best in the class on the tests. So, she has, um, definitely inspired me just by being who she is.
- B - Like I said at the beginning of the year, I was having trouble with one of my Econ classes, and I was doing really bad. My friends just kept telling me, "Just keep trying...keep studying." I remember I had this test and I had to study for 2 or 3 days for this test. They were very supportive.

C - I'd say if anything, my peers. There have been a lot of people that have offered to study with me, and there's been quite a few guys on the 3rd floor that I have had classes with that are super smart. And they have really helped me out, especially during test times.

Anything you would like to add?

A - Well, like I said before, I personally love this place, but I will not be back in the dorms next year, but if I was going to be, I would definitely move back here, and I will probably be visiting here a lot.

B - When I first got in here, I was kind of nervous, because I didn't really want...After coming through high school and taking honors and AP classes, I didn't want that in college, I just wanted to be like a normal college student. When I found out I was in the Honors building, I was kind of like, "Oh, Man!" I was like disappointed, because I just wanted to be a regular college student, and I thought, "These kids will just be studying and it won't be any fun." And I actually had the wrong perception. After talking to people that live in other dorms, I like it so much better. The rooms – you have your own privacy, but still have the roommate. It is very social environment, people know when to study and they know when to have fun. There are a whole bunch of activities going around. And I feel like you get to know more people, because it is a separate building whereas the other ones are just huge and have hundreds of students.

C - I really like this environment a lot. I have noticed that from going to other buildings, the people here are close. I would say that it could almost be compared to a high school, in a sense, because it is off in its own little world, but I like that. My roommate next year has even said she is coming back here because if she is tempted to go out and party or whatever, she's not as much here as she would be in the other dorms. It is really friendly, open...hardly ever a floor where all the doors are closed, like they are almost always open. I do feel safe here. There is always an RA on rounds, night staff, I will be doing that next fall semester. Yeah, I like it a lot. I think the people here and the committees and stuff work really hard to have fun activities, and I really appreciate that.

Non-Honors Freshman Students Residing in Non-Honors Environments

Interview Answers

Transcribed from audio recording

Listed as Interviewees D, E, and F

Where do you feel that you have a quiet place to study within the hall?

D – The lounge but I love the dining area at night

E - The only place I feel that I can study is in the study lounge and sometimes not even there because people are always socializing.

F – Um, my room and the study lounge, both.

What was your G.P.A. last semester?

D – 2.8

E – 3.8

F – 3.3

How do fellow students in your hall promote studying?

D - At floor meetings we would talk about quiet times and places.

E - It seems that a lot of students go to the library with friends or get together in the study lounge to study.

F – If you are in the study lounge, they will let you study. They don't really...like they'll keep it down if they know you're trying to study, they'll like, try to be quiet for you. They really like, leave me alone if I am trying to study and they know I'm studying. They'll just not talk to me.

How do you feel that your grades are affected by your roommate/floormates?

D – Majorly, when I had a roommate my grades sucked, but after separating, I realized I have to push myself because she was no longer there to do that for me and no longer there to distract me. I love her to death, don't get me wrong, but my grades did get better.

E - None whatsoever. I feel that my grades rely solely on me. If it is too loud in the hall to study; I take it upon myself to go to the library or a quieter lounge.

F – I think my roommate does a good job of knowing when I need to study. If I have to study, she goes with others into the study lounge.

Is it quiet in your hall at a reasonable time for you to sleep before classes?

D - Yeah after the moving was done.

E - Most of the time, however I did have one very obnoxious neighbor that I had to warn several times.

F – Yeah, it is quiet for us, and I think, it's like 10:30/11:00 that quiet hours start, but, um that is pretty much enforced by the RAs, but it is normally quiet by around midnight or so. And I never go to bed before then.

Do your friends within your hall regularly attend class?

D – Generally, yes.

E - There are girls in my hall that do not attend class, but almost all of my friends regularly attend class.

F – Um, most of them. There are people that I know that don't go to class, but most of the people that I am close to do go.

How often do you miss class?

D – Once every three weeks or so.

E - I rarely miss class, last semester I believe that I missed two classes due to illness. All in total my freshman year, I missed about ten classes.

F – Once a week, every two weeks, not too often.

Are you involved in any on-campus organizations?

D - Mine isn't necessarily a real organization, but me and many of my friends (some lived on my floor) made a fan group for the men's volleyball team. We traveled and supported them. I guess that counts.

E - I am involved with Alpha Omicron Pi, a social sorority, Alpha Lambda Delta, Academic Fraternity, and I also hold an on-campus job.

F – Yes, I am in Kappa Delta sorority.

Who encouraged you to join these?

D - Whoever is interested in it should do it, not because your friends did.

E - Alpha Lambda Delta was by invitation only and I made the decision myself to join a social sorority in order to make the campus smaller. And, I had to get a job for money of course.

F – I had a friend from high school that was in a sorority and she really liked it, so she wanted me to rush. My mom really encouraged it, because she, my mom never really got involved in college. So, she wanted me to get involved. And when I talked to her about it, she supported it.

Are you in any leadership roles on-campus?

D - No

E – I just became an orientation leader at Ball State!

F – No, but with my sorority I do the website for them, but other than that, no.

How have your study habits changed since high school?

D – Well, I can control when I study and when I don't. That makes me feel relaxed.

E - Yes, they have changed immensely. I study much harder and longer and more thorough than in high school.

F – I study more. I definitely have realized I have to study to maintain a higher grade. In high school, I didn't really have to study too much, but my classes now are harder. I'm a nursing major, so I'm taking classes I didn't have to take in high school and they are harder. I have to read a lot more.

Do you feel like this environment has played a significant role in your success?

D - Yeah you can get help everywhere. Plus I am a person who needs to establish a friendship of some sort, because it makes it easier to study with them. Many people in my environment were perfect for that.

E - No, I feel that the fact that I am paying so much to be here and the fact that I get to start out with a clean slate made me want to try hard.

F – Yes, because I think this is great building for freshman to come into, because everyone here is friendly and they definitely support getting involved in things and doing a lot of things with other freshman. And people here seem to be really friendly. I don't know what it's like in other dorms, but people here seem to be really friendly and have their doors open all the time. You can talk to people and there are a lot of girls on my floor that I've made friends with just because they are easy to talk to. I really feel like if I hadn't had that many friends and I hadn't have felt like I was wanted, then I wouldn't have enjoyed college so much.

Why did you come to college?

D – My parents mostly. I have always had a professional job and didn't feel like I needed to go farther, but now I realize that it was a smart decision.

E - Honestly, I didn't want to but I didn't know what to do with the next step of my life.

F – I want to be a nurse.

Is Ball State meeting your expectations of college life? Why or why not?

D - Oh yeah, I am glad I made that decision. I always said if I am going to college then I am going away for college. It's not only an education you are getting it is also a life learning lesson. I loved every good and bad moment at Ball State.

E - Yes, I expected the classes to be challenging and more broad than in high school. I also expected there to be tons of clubs and organizations, as well as party atmospheres.

F – Yeah, I think it definitely is. I just wanted to come to school and get out of high school, have a different experience and be on my own. And it definitely is, but again, at the same time I am close to home. I like that, because I don't know, I get homesick easily. My mom is my best friend, she is close, so I can still hang out with her.

How were you hoping to do academically?

D - Good, but I don't have to be the best.

E – I was hoping to be an A-B student.

F – I wanted to pretty much have an A or B average.

Did you set goals for your grades?

D - No

E - Yes, my sorority had all members set goals at the beginning of each semester.

F - Um, at first I wanted to have an A or B average, but then once I got in my classes, I just wanted to pass. They were pretty hard. (*Laughs*)

How did you strive to meet those goals?

D - (*Passed on question*)

E - I studied and used time management skills.

F - Well, this semester it has been a lot more difficult than first semester. I have one class that's definitely been giving me a lot of trouble. I ended up getting a tutor at the learning center and I also get tutored by the professor, so I definitely have to work a lot harder now.

What do people on your floor discuss about classes?

D - Just mostly how every classes is different and hard to keep up on.

E - We would discuss which professors suck and which classes are easy.

F - Yeah, we don't really discuss too much, just that we don't want to go in the mornings and stuff. Sometimes, I have this girl that lives down my hall and she is in my classes. Some people talk about what they got there, what we got on the test and whatever.

Do you have meetings with your professors?

D - A couple of times.

E - I didn't have any meetings with professors unless it was required.

F - Not, other than that class, not too often. I have gone to a few of their office hours, but not too many of them.

How are you challenged academically by your roommate?

D - I'm not really challenged so I am going to have to pass on this one.

E - I'm not!

F - I don't know that I have. We were really good friends in high school, so we have similar study habits. We're completely different majors, so we don't really have classes together. It's definitely been, I've had to find more time to study. I've had to go down to the study lounge, which is probably better for me anyway. I can study better.

Are you involved in hall council?

D - No, I do occasionally help decorate and get people in the mood for things.

E - No

F - No

How many hours/ week do you spend on academics?

D - Probably around 20

E - About 15-20 hours/week.

F - Um, like 10? Depends, really.

How many hours/week do you spend socializing?

D - (*Laughs*) More like 60!

E - Around 30ish.

F - I don't know, a lot more. Um, probably like 20. (*Laughs*) Definitely more, at least twice as much. Being in a sorority, I socialize a lot.

Do you feel supported academically by your RA, RHD/ARHD?

D - Yeah, I did by my second RA, not the first one.

E - Not particularly.

F - Yeah, my RA is actually the one who told me to go get a tutor and talk to my professor when I was having trouble. She is always offering to like, read my papers for me and proofread things for me and make sure that I know what I am doing and quiz me over stuff, even if she doesn't know what she is talking about (*Laughs*). So, yeah, definitely, she's great.

Have you declared a major?

D - Yes, ZOOLOGY!

E - Yes.

F - Nursing

Can you describe a time to me that you felt supported academically by a person living in your building?

D - My friends down the hall always kept me going and helped me with things I didn't understand.

E - My best friend lived on my floor and we were both like-minded hard workers. We motivated each other to study and would often study in the lounge at the same times and take breaks together.

F - Well, like last semester, there were a lot of girls, there was a girl that was next to me. We've become really close. She was in one of my classes. We would always study together before every test. That was really helpful. And, again my RA has been really supportive. There have been many times I have gone to her thinking I wasn't going to pass, thinking I was going to switch my major and everything. She kind of helped put me back on the right track saying, "You want to be a nurse. You're going to do this. You'll be fine." Definitely given me a shoulder to cry on and stuff. So, my RA's definitely been awesome.

Anything you would like to add?

D – (*No Response*)

E – (*No Response*)

F – I think that, I like living in the hall, a lot. I would really recommend it to people. Um, I have a few friends that live in the Honors College and they don't really have anything negative to say about it, but they don't really have any outstanding things to say about it either. I'm actually really close to one of the girls that lives over there. I've become friends with her and she always...well, we seem to have similar study habits, so I mean. I think I would be able to get in the Honors College if I wanted to, but I don't actually. I really just wanted to not worry too much about it. I really like it in these dorms.